



**AT SEA** PACIFIC OCEAN -- Daylight dwindles off Southern California's coast Labor Day as the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island and the embarked 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit continued operations here. *Gunnery Sgt. Scott Dunn*

## Ahead of deploying, unit trains from ships

By 11th MEU Public Affairs

The 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit began a 16-day at-sea exercise Sept. 1 with the Navy's Amphibious Squadron Five aboard amphibious ships off Southern California's coast.

While embarked aboard USS Makin Island and USS New Orleans, Marines and sailors with the unit conducted ship-to-shore training.

The unit conducted helicopter-

borne raids, personnel recovery, humanitarian aid and noncombatant evacuations to prepare for a Western Pacific deployment.

Preparing a dynamic organization like this is a challenge; each piece of the puzzle complements each other during the six-month work-up cycle prior to the certification exercise, said Lt. Col. Thomas Prentice, unit operations officer.

The exercise is the second time the unit has gone to sea since becoming a complete Marine air-ground task force in May.

### FIRST AT SEA

By Capt. Roger Hollenbeck

SAN DIEGO — The 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit conducted a 12-day exercise Aug. 10 with the Navy's Amphibious Squadron Five aboard amphibious ships, working together at sea for the first time since the unit formed a complete Marine air-ground task force in May.

After embarking USS Makin Island and USS New Orleans docked in San Diego, the services

see FIRST, pg. 3



# Co. I trains to descend from helos by rope

By Lance Cpl. Ryan Carpenter

PACIFIC OCEAN — Marines and sailors serving with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit’s ground combat element slid 35 feet down a thick, plaited rope rigged to a parked helicopter on the amphibious assault ship Makin Island miles off Southern California’s coast Sept 8.

The training simulated a technique for inserting a company-sized force into an objective area.

“When we’re inserting by air – in six or eight aircraft – fast-roping from helicopters is the answer if we encounter a fouled (landing zone), be it debris or obstacles, or we’re restricted from landing in an urban environment,” said Company I executive officer and Boston native 1st Lt. Matthew Astphan. “And if we’re proficient enough, it’s actually faster to rope down into multiple sites without the pilots having to land.”

Company I is one of three rifles companies in Battalion Landing Team 3/1 and serves primarily as a dedicated helicopter-borne raid force.

Astphan said two of the company’s platoons fast-roped from helicopters in July, descending from altitudes as high as 50 feet.

“By practicing and rehearsing, we’ll get better at fast-roping,” said Sgt. Jeffrey Draney, a helicopter rope-suspension technique master with the company. “This training will enable the Marines to prepare for the upcoming deployment and whatever the MEU may be tasked with.”



**Sgt. Maj. Scott T. Pile speaks to 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit Marines and sailors embarked aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island parked pierside at Naval Base San Diego Aug. 9. The unit’s sergeant major spoke to the service members as the ship prepared to train with the Navy’s Amphibious Squadron Five Aug. 10-22. When Makin Island sailed from port, it was the first time doing so with its full complement of Marines – more than 1,000 men and women from West Coast Marine Corps installations.** *Gunnery Sgt. Scott Dunn*

## Sailors teach Marines ship safety

By Lance Cpl. Ryan Carpenter

USS NEW ORLEANS — Eleventh Marine Expeditionary Unit service members aboard this amphibious transport dock learned to be safe amphibians here Aug. 13 during a Navy-taught orientation.

Attending were Company L Marines and sailors during the unit’s first seagoing exercise since becoming a complete Marine air ground task force in May.

The Marines -- many having never been aboard a naval vessel -- learned things like how to navigate the ship by decoding numbers on the ship’s bulkheads, how to spot and report electrical hazards,

and to how to use the emergency oxygen tanks found under every bed.

“Safety on ship is not just the commanding officer’s responsibility; it’s for all hands,” said Master Chief Petty Officer Rolando Bayquen, lead chief petty officer for the ship’s electrical division.

Company L is one of three rifle companies in Battalion Landing Team 3/1, which serves as the ground combat element for the unit.

“The most important thing I learned is if you don’t know what something on the ship is, then don’t touch it,” said Lance Cpl. Vince Schoeninger, a 23-year-old Denver native and a team leader with the company.

**FIRST**, from pg. 1 sailed out from the Pacific coast to plan and conduct training missions from the sea, landing a variety of aircraft and landing craft on Pendleton’s shores, and operating as far inland as Yuma, Ariz.

The exercise was the first time the unit has gone to sea since assuming operational control of Battalion Landing Team 3/1, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 268 (Reinforced) and Combat Logistics Battalion 11.

“We have taken full advantage of several opportunities to train with our Navy counterparts over the last several months,” said Col. Michael R. Hudson, the 11th MEU’s commanding officer. “This iteration of training is specifically focused on our staff’s ability to plan and execute together from ship, as a well-oiled, synchronized, blue-green team.”

The MEU’s pre-deployment training cycle contains land-based training and three sea-based exercises designed to prepare the service members for their deployment to the Western Pacific, Middle East and Horn of Africa regions this fall.

The MEU’s mission is to provide a rapid-response forward deployed force capable of conducting conventional amphibious and selected maritime special operations from the sea, by surface or by air.

During this two-week period, the MEU conducted supporting-arms live-fire training -- controlling helicopters, firing howitzers and dropping ordnance from AV-8B Harriers. The unit also trained to retake seagoing vessels from pirates and to conduct amphibious assaults, helicopter-borne raids, personnel recovery, humanitarian aid and noncombatant evacuations.

USS Makin Island, along with USS New Orleans, USS Pearl Harbor and Amphibious Squadron 5 form the Makin Island Amphibious Ready Group, the Navy or “blue-side” partner to the Marines’ “green-side.”

MSEs

## Major Subordinate Elements

### MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 268 (REINFORCED)

Called the Red Dragons, the 11th MEU’s aviation-combat element, or ACE, is a reinforced CH-46E Sea Knight

#### Aviation Combat Element

helicopter squadron based at Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton. It consists of about 350 Marines and sailors, and its detachments from various Southern California and Arizona units bring CH-53E Super Stallion



heavy-lift helicopters and AV-8B Harrier jets. Moreover, KC-130 transport planes are on standby ashore to support the unit when needed.

The ACE brings to the 11th MEU the Corps’ upgraded AH-1Z Super

Cobra assault helicopter and UH-1Y utility helicopter, known as the Yankee/Zulu package. The four-bladed airframes fly distinctively different missions, but their commonality of engine parts and flight operation make for streamlined cost, training and maintenance.

To operate, maintain and defend its assets, the ACE has air-traffic control, air defense, aircraft maintenance and supply personnel.



#### COMBAT LOGISTICS BATTALION 11

The logistics-combat element, or LCE, consists of approximately 300 Marines and sailors and provides combat support, including

supply, maintenance, transportation, explosive ordnance disposal, military police, water production and distribution, engineering, medical and dental services and fuel storage and distribution. The LCE gives the 11th MEU the ability to support itself for 15 days in any environment.

Its men and women also train to conduct humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.



### BATTALION LANDING TEAM 3/1

The battalion landing team, a standard MEU ground-combat element, is an infantry battalion reinforced by an artillery battery, amphibious-assault vehicles, combat engineers, reconnaissance, tanks and light-armored reconnaissance vehicles.

The GCE’s central component is its infantry battalion, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines, aka the Thundering Third. Based at Camp Pendleton, Calif., the battalion consists of approximately 1,200 Marines and sailors.

The battalion returned in November, 2010, after a seven-month deployment conducting counterinsurgency operations in the southern Afghanistan district of Garmsir.

The GCE’s units come from Camp Pendleton and Twentynine Palms, Calif., and its training program will prepare Marines to conduct land-based, amphibious and maritime operations, including offensive, defensive, reconnaissance and security operations.



*Pacific Pride*, an authorized government-funded publication, is published for informational purposes only and is not directive in nature. Contents of *Pacific Pride* are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, the Department of the Navy or the U.S. Marine Corps.

### 11TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT

COMMANDING OFFICER  
Col. Michael R. Hudson

EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
Lt. Col. Michael P. Wylie

SERGEANT MAJOR  
Sgt. Maj. Scott Pile

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER  
Capt. Roger Hollenbeck

### Volume 4.2, Aug.-Sept. 2011

Featuring the unit’s first and second sea-based training exercises

The 11th MEU conducted its first seagoing exercises based aboard USS Makin Island and USS New Orleans — practicing ship-to-shore operations, air strikes, daytime and nighttime raids, humanitarian assistance and noncombatant evacuations.





Marines serving with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit's Battalion Landing Team 3/1 walk through a range before participating in a live-fire exercise at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms Sept. 4. The Marines performed a live-fire, long-range helicopter raid between USS Makin Island and Twentynine Palms. *Cpl. Gene Allen Ainsworth III*

## India Co. conducts long-range heliborne raid



Cpl. Michael G. Figueroa provides security here Sept. 4 during a live-fire exercise. The Boston native and intelligence specialist serves with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit's Battalion Landing Team 3/1. *Cpl. Gene Allen Ainsworth III*

*By 11th MEU Public Affairs*

PACIFIC OCEAN — Helicopters carrying Company I Marines from an oceangoing ship flew 115 miles inland to Twentynine Palms, Calif., where the riflemen performed a daytime live-fire training raid Sept. 4.

Pilots of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 268 (Reinforced) — the aviation combat element of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit — flew the raiders from the amphibious assault ship Makin Island off Southern California's coast to a range at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms.

"Training helps sharpen our skills and allows us the ability to conduct any mission at a moment's notice," said Cpl. Charles D. West, a squad leader with Company I.

The rifle company is one of three in Battalion Landing Team 3/1, the unit's ground combat element.

see LONG-RANGE, pg. 5



Marines serving with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit's Battalion Landing Team 3/1 wait for other Marines, not shown, to cross an opening at a Twentynine Palms training range Sept. 4.

*Cpl. Gene Allen Ainsworth III*

### LONG-RANGE, from pg. 4

Machine gunners provided fire support for the maneuver element, which moved toward an objective to capture a role player acting as a suspected terrorist, according to West, 22, who hails from Rockford, Ill.

"The Marines are prepared for deployment," said Capt. Matt McGirr, who hails from Buffalo, N.Y., and serves as Company I's commanding officer. "They were able to pull off a company-level long-range helo raid from ship-to-shore, with live fire and minimal rehearsal, with great success."

Marines with the squadron set up a forward arming and refueling point in Barstow, Calif., allowing CH-46E Sea Knights, CH-53E Sea Stallions, UH-1Y Venoms, AH-1Z Vipers and AV-8B Harriers to fly inland and cover the distance from sea to objective.

The unit — scheduled to deploy this fall to the Western Pacific and Middle East regions — began a sea-based exercise Sept. 1, the second aboard amphibious ships since becoming a complete Marine air-ground task force in May.

## Balloon from sea relays comms far inland

*By Sgt. Elyssa Quesada*

PACIFIC OCEAN — Marines serving with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit launched a communications balloon Sept. 4 from the amphibious assault ship Makin Island off Southern California's coast.

The balloon is designed to carry a radio relay up to 80,000 feet above Earth, extending communications to an area 600 miles in diameter, regardless of terrain.

"The Marines are improving a lot," said Staff Sgt. Tatum M. Kaneta, MEU radio chief and Honolulu native. "We are getting our operating procedures down and becoming more proficient in the steps we need to take for a successful balloon launch."

The unit embarked the amphibious assault ship Makin Island and the amphibious transport dock New Orleans in San Diego Sept. 1 to begin a



Staff Sgt. Tatum Kaneta, left, observes a communications balloon aboard the amphibious assault ship Makin Island off Southern California's coast Sept. 4 while radio operator and Sulphur, La., native Cpl. Tyler Molitor connects a helium line. *Staff Sgt. Chance W. Haworth*

second seagoing exercise since becoming a complete Marine air-ground task force in May.

The balloon provided instant communication with a long-range raid force in Twen-

tyne Palms, Calif., allowing more stable, clear and understandable communication between ship and shore parties, said Kaneta.

Marines with Company I, Battalion Landing Team 3/1, were the raiders inserted by the unit's aviation combat element, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 268 (Reinforced).

Radio chief and Honolulu native Staff Sgt. Tatum Kaneta receives authorization to release a communications balloon from the amphibious assault ship Makin Island off Southern California's coast Sept. 4. The balloon is designed to carry a radio relay up to 80,000 feet above Earth, extending communications to an area 600 miles in diameter, regardless of terrain. Kaneta serves with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit's command element. *Staff Sgt. Chance W. Haworth*



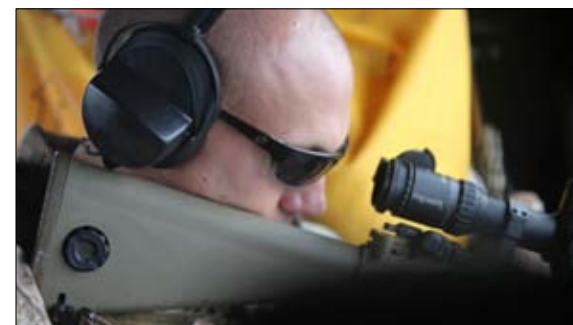




A Navy boat launched from USS New Orleans Aug. 12 carries maritime raid force members of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit. The force's assault element practiced boarding vessels from the ocean's surface miles from Southern California.  
*Lance Cpl. Ryan Carpenter*



A Navy boat launched from USS New Orleans Aug. 14 carries maritime raid force members of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit to a vessel the force's assault element later boarded during training miles from Southern California's San Clemente Island. *Lance Cpl. Justin R. Stein*



A scout sniper serving with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit's maritime raid force sights in from a helicopter during counter-piracy and counter-terrorism training Aug. 14. *Lance Cpl. Justin R. Stein*



Maritime raid force Marines and sailors prepare to board a vessel miles from Southern California's San Clemente Island during counter-piracy and counter-terrorism training Aug. 14. *Lance Cpl. Justin R. Stein*

# RETAKEN

## Raid on mock pirated vessel planned, launched from sea

*By Gunnery Sgt. Scott Dunn*

PACIFIC OCEAN — Training to retake a hijacked seagoing vessel, maritime raiders boarded their floating objective miles from Southern California's San Clemente Island Aug. 14, while overhead, helicopters flew unseen snipers and heavy guns.

The raid force's assault element — Marines and sailors serving with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit — launched from USS New Orleans on Navy rigid-hulled inflatable boats, executing counter-piracy and coun-

ter-terrorism tactics rehearsed days before — essentially visiting, boarding, searching and seizing an ocean vessel.

From USS Makin Island, the unit's aviation combat element launched four of its skid-landing helicopters: a pair of AH-1Z Viper attack helicopters and two UH-1Y Venom utility helicopters, one carrying scout snipers with high-powered rifles.

The Marines apprehended a small group of actors portraying terrorists-cum-pirates, seized small-arms weapons and returned the vessel to its owner.



**COMPANY L**

# Mechanized company from sea raids island, makes capture

*Story and Photographs  
By Lance Cpl. Ryan Carpenter*

SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND, Calif. — A rifle company with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit raided simulated enemy installations here Sept. 12 during the unit's second at-sea exercise since becoming a complete Marine air-ground task force in May.

Launched in amphibious assault vehicles from USS New Orleans, Company L moved from the sea, neutralized mock-enemy forces, gathered intelligence and

captured an enemy role player before returning to the vessel.

In six hours from receiving its mission, the company planned, prepared and rehearsed before launching the first wave of vehicles.

Company L gunnery sergeant Gunnery Sgt. Patrick E. Fay said it was the first raid that used a realistic format: "The actions on the objective went well – from the beginning of the planning process to the actual execution."

The detainee offered additional training.

"Until now we had never

validated that process," said Fay.

"It was the first time we detained an individual, brought him back to the ship, processed him and handed him over to the Navy."

Company L is one of three rifle companies with Battalion Landing Team 3/1, the ground-combat element for the unit, which is scheduled to deploy this fall.

A platoon of tracked vehicles from 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion, Camp Pendleton, Calif., reinforces the Pendleton-based 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines. The platoon provides the go-to means of maneuver for Company L.



Marines in amphibious assault vehicles launched to San Clemente Island, Calif., from USS New Orleans offshore provide security Sept. 12 during training. The vehicles transported Marines and sailors of Company L, one of three rifle companies in Battalion Landing Team 3/1, the ground combat element for the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit. The unit began a sea-based exercise Sept. 1, its second aboard amphibious ships since becoming a complete Marine air-ground task force in May. A platoon of tracked vehicles from 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion, Camp Pendleton, Calif., reinforces the Pendleton-based 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines. The platoon provides the go-to means of maneuver for Company L.



Company L squad leader and 26-year-old Tomball, Texas, native Sgt. Alex M. Piasecki provides security.



An amphibious assault vehicle disembarked from USS New Orleans and transporting Marines and sailors of Company L lands on the island.



Combat engineer Cpl. Zane M. Arnett, a 23-year-old Palisade, Colo., native serving with Company L, runs to a security position.





Squads of Marines and one sailor move from a landing zone here Sept. 1 during a four-day course in which Company L service members learned to recover downed or lost pilots and personnel. Pilots from the unit's aviation combat element, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 268 (Reinforced), flew helicopters in support of the course. *Lance Cpl. Ryan Carpenter*



Platoon sergeant Staff Sgt. Derek Clayton, right, counts passing Marines here Sept. 1 during a four-day course in which Company L riflemen learned to recover downed or lost pilots and personnel. Clayton is a 30-year-old Toms River, N.J., native. *Lance Cpl. Ryan Carpenter*

# LOST & FOUND

## Platoon trains to recover isolated pilots

Story and Photographs  
By Lance Cpl. Ryan Carpenter

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. — A platoon with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit learned the importance of recovering troops trapped behind enemy lines during a course here Aug. 30 to Sept. 2.

Third Platoon, Company L, transported by the unit's aviation combat element, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 268



Company L service members aid a role player here Sept. 1 during a four-day course in which one of the company's platoons learned to recover downed or lost pilots and personnel. Company L is one of three rifle companies in Battalion Landing Team 3/1, the ground-combat element of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit. *Lance Cpl. Ryan Carpenter*

(Reinforced), participated in classroom lectures, practical applications and simulated full-scale missions during the four-day Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel course.

Company L is the unit's second rifle company to participate in the course since becoming a complete Marine air-ground task force in May.

The course, hosted by I Marine Expeditionary Force's Special Operations Training Group, trains small forces on what equipment to recover or destroy on aircraft, and to how quickly return isolated personnel to friendly lines.

Before the course started, platoon commander 1st Lt. Scott D. Williams spoke to those in his charge about the importance of becoming a proficient TRAP platoon.

"Our first mission is to ask questions, learn, and understand the information that is taught" said Williams, a 31-year-old Oviedo, Fla., native. "Our second mission is to communicate to our higher that we can be a go-to force when needed."

The training comes less than a year after a U.S. Air Force pilot was rescued in Libya by Marines from the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit.

Company L is one of three rifle companies with Battalion Landing Team 3/1, the ground combat element for the unit, scheduled to deploy this fall.



Team leader Cpl. Timur Y. Oljuskin frees a dummy simulating a tree-entangled parachutist Aug. 31. Oljuskin, 22, is from Oshkosh, Wis. He serves with Company L. *Lance Cpl. Ryan Carpenter*

## Mortars platoon hones skills in live-fire exercise

By Sgt. Elyssa Quesada

Marines and sailors with Weapons Company, Battalion Landing Team 3/1, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, participated in a live-fire exercise on San Clemente Island, Calif., Sept. 12-13 during the unit's second sea-based exercise since becoming a complete Marine air-ground task force in May.

During the exercise, MEU Marines coordinated mortar fire, naval gun fire and air strikes. The island's training area provided an 81 mm mortar platoon an environment to improve skills and develop combined joint air, land and sea fire-support capabilities.

"The exercise requires a lot of coordination from each fire agency to meet the unit's needs," said Gunnery Sgt. Aaron L. Galey, the field artillery operations chief with mortar platoon. "During the live-fire, we were able to provide indirect fire support for supporting arms and fire-support coordination centers."

The exercise included two AH-1Z Vipers and two AV-8B Harriers with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 268 (Reinforced), logistics support from Combat Logistics Battalion 11, and artillery with Kilo Battery.

"Training allows our command to be 100-percent confident of our capabilities and en-



LEFT: Gunner and Monterey, Calif., native Lance Cpl. Mark Buloson loads a mortar tube. ABOVE: Squad leader and Murrieta, Calif., native Cpl. Luis A. Lerma prepares for a live-fire exercise here Sept. 11. The Marines serve with Weapons Company's 81 mm mortar platoon.

ures top performance during time of war," said Cpl. Luis A. Lerma, a squad leader with the mortar platoon.

Training will help the Ma-

rines become proficient mortar-men and provide accurate and timely fires for any situation that may arise during deployment, Galey said.



CH-46E Sea Knights with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 268 (Reinforced) spin their blades at a desert arming-and-refueling point Aug. 16 where Marines serving with the squadron refueled the helicopters that carried riflemen from an oceangoing ship 200 miles away, allowing a heliborne raid company to press on to its nighttime training objective miles away. Marines serving with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit's reinforced helicopter squadron set up and manned the position — operating at night and filling seven helicopters. *Sgt. Elyssa Quesada*

## Heliborne raid force from sea refuels in desert

By Sgt. Elyssa Quesada

YUMA PROVING GROUND, Ariz. — Marines in the desert here refueled helicopters carrying riflemen from an oceangoing ship 200 miles away, allowing a heliborne raid company to press on to its nighttime training objective miles away Aug. 17.

Marines serving with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit's reinforced helicopter squadron had two days earlier set up and

manned the forward arming-and-refueling point so CH-46E Sea Knights could fly Company I Marines and Navy corpsmen inland from USS Makin Island off Southern California's coast and safely cover the distance.

"The Marines did a great job. They were able to battle the 100-degrees-plus weather, stay up late hours ... still provide refueling, and resupply the Marines to get the long-range mission accomplished," said Master Sgt. Mack Hall, the refueling

point staff noncommissioned officer in charge.

Operating at night, the squadron's bulk-fuel specialists filled seven helicopters and conducted hot refuels — basically refueling aircraft not completely shut down.

"This exercise demonstrated the capabilities of bulk-fuel specialists, air-traffic controllers and pilots, and it shows we can operate in a temporary position," said bulk-fuel specialist Lance Cpl. Michael B. McGuiness.





**Cpl. Anthony Peterson, a 25-year-old Shorewood, Minn., native and team leader stands in a combat-town building Aug. 17 during a field exercise.** *Lance Cpl. Ryan Carpenter*



**Marines and sailors on a Navy hovercraft launched from the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island land at San Clemente Island, Calif., Sept. 8.** *Gunnery Sgt. Scott Dunn*



**The amphibious assault ship Makin Island sails off Southern California's coast Aug. 18.** *Gunnery Sgt. Scott Dunn*



**Phoenix native Pfc. Taylor D. Welcome, right, and fellow artillerymen serving with Battery K man a howitzer firing a high-explosive round onto a San Clemente Island range Aug. 12.** *Cpl. Gene Allen Ainsworth III*



**Rifleman and 22-year-old Orange, Texas, native Lance Cpl. Jeremy Phares, left, rides in an amphibious assault vehicle Aug. 15 during a live-fire exercise with Company L.** *Lance Cpl. Ryan Carpenter*



**Company L machine gunner and 27-year-old Bakersfield, Calif., native Lance Cpl. Vincent A. Gonzales covers a corner Aug. 17 during a field exercise.** *Lance Cpl. Ryan Carpenter*

## Raid force retakes simulated pirated ship

*By Sgt. Elyssa Quesada*

Marines with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit's maritime raid force boarded a simulated hijacked vessel off Southern California's San Clemente Island during a training exercise Sept. 7.

The assault force launched from USS New Orleans on Navy rigid-hulled inflatable boats, executing counterpiracy and counterterrorism techniques – visiting, boarding, searching and seizing the seagoing vessel.

“It's important to know that we have a plan in place in the event someone takes over a ship. We are prepared to take it back and return it to its rightful owners without harming innocent personnel on board,”



**Maritime raid force members board a vessel miles from Southern California's San Clemente Island during counter-piracy and counter-terrorism training Sept. 7.** *Sgt. Elyssa Quesada*

said Master Gunnery Sgt. Wilbert Haverly, MEU operations chief.

Pilots with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 268 (Reinforced) – the unit's aviation combat element – flew two CH-46E Sea Knights, one UH-1Y Huey Venom with snipers on board, two AH-1Z Viper attack helicopters, and two AV-8B Harriers. The Navy supported the mission by flying an MH-60S Seahawk search-and-rescue helicopter.

Marines seized weapons and appre-

hended role players portraying pirates and returned the vessel to its owner.

“The Marines and sailors performed exceptionally well during this dynamic and complex evolution,” said Maj. Anthonol L. Neely, the maritime raid force's commanding officer and Nashville native. “The mission was another example of teamwork at every level, and I have every confidence that if called upon in theater, we'll be ready for tasking.”



**AIR DELIVERY:** Cargo drops from a KC-135 over Camp Pendleton, Calif., Sept. 9. An aerial delivery team from Combat Logistics Battalion 11 coordinated the drop with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 268 (Reinforced) to support humanitarian-assistance training. *Lance Cpl. Claudia Palacios*





Amphibious assault vehicles drive in the ocean Aug. 10. *Lance Cpl. Ryan Carpenter*



Helicopter crew chief Lance Cpl. Michael H. Dionne, flying in a UH-1Y Huey Venom, scans for seacraft over waters off Southern California's coast Aug. 18. Dionne, 21, hails from Mayslanding, N.J. *Gunnery Sgt. Scott Dunn*



Company K Marines fire a 60 mm mortar, setting the baseplate in the dirt during training Sept. 7. *Pfc. Timothy Childers*



ABOVE: Cpl. Darrick Pratt, left, provides security at a simulation in which men and women of Combat Logistics Battalion 11 processed role players acting as evacuees Sept. 5. LEFT: Helicopter crew chief Cpl. Mathew A. Collins prepares a UH-1Y Huey Venom before a training mission over waters off Southern California's coast Aug. 18. *Gunnery Sgt. Scott Dunn*



Sgt. Jesus M. Riojas calls for an artillery strike Aug. 13. *Cpl. Gene Allen Ainsworth III*



Actors portray victims of a natural disaster during Combat Logistics Battalion 11's humanitarian assistance training Aug. 12. *Lance Cpl. Claudia Palacios*



The amphibious assault ship Makin Island sails off Southern California's coast during a training mission Aug. 18. Pictured in the foreground is helicopter crew chief Lance Cpl. Michael H. Dionne, flying in a UH-1Y Huey Venom. *Gunnery Sgt. Scott Dunn*



Marines rehearse rushing an enemy position Aug. 15 during a live-fire exercise with Company L. *Lance Cpl. Ryan Carpenter*



## CO. I MARINES LEARN THE ROPES

**PACIFIC OCEAN** – Company I machine gunner Pfc. Deyton Bogrett descends 35 feet down a thick, plaited rope rigged to a helicopter parked on the amphibious assault ship Makin Island at sea miles off Southern California's coast Sept. 8. The 25-year-old Wildrose, N.D., native serves with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit's ground combat element, Battalion Landing Team 3/1. The unit is conducting a second sea-based exercise since becoming a complete Marine-air ground task force in May. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Tommy Huynh)

